

**BEST AVAILABLE COPY**Application No.: 10/773,447Docket No.: 713-1058AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:Listing of the claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1-4. (canceled)

5. (Currently amended) A strip of fasteners for a fastening apparatus with a loading device intended to take the strip, each fastener comprising a shank pointed at one end and bearing a head at the other end, the fasteners being engaged respectively via the respective shanks in guide pegs joined together into a string before said fasteners are transferred, one by one, from the loading device into the apparatus, in a firing position;

wherein

the guide pegs each have a tubular part and a ring surmounting the tubular part, the ring being configured to have the head of the fastener normally bear thereagainst;

at least one of the guide pegs at the end of the string comprises comprising a support [[means]] for preventing said at least one guide peg from tilting as said at least one guide peg is transferred from the loading device into the apparatus;

said support [[means]] comprise comprising at least one lug two lugs which are essentially symmetric with respect to an overall plane of the strip and which extend from the ring extending transversely to [[an]] the overall plane of the strip;

each guide peg comprises two transverse lugs which are symmetric with respect to the overall plane of the strip; and

all the guide pegs of the strip have the lugs.

**Application No.: 10/773,447****Docket No.: 713-1058**

6. (canceled)

7. (Previously presented) An indirect-acting fastening apparatus, comprising a weight adapted to be propelled along a bore of said apparatus to drive a fastener of a strip of fasteners according to claim 5, wherein the bore, in which the weight is adapted to be propelled and which is adapted to receive the fastener with the respective guide peg provided with the lugs, is grooved so as to accommodate the lugs of the guide pegs of the strip of fasteners.

8. (canceled)

9. (Previously presented) A loading device for an indirect-acting fastening apparatus having a weight adapted to be propelled along a bore of said apparatus to drive a fastener of a strip of fasteners according to claim 5, the loading-device being adapted to take the strip of fasteners and transfer the fasteners into a firing position in the apparatus,

said loading device comprising a chamber for housing the guide pegs of the fasteners of the strip, the chamber being grooved so as to accommodate the lugs of the guide pegs of the strip of fasteners.

10. (canceled)

11. (Currently amended) A strip of fasteners for a fastening apparatus, comprising:

a plurality of fasteners each comprising a shank being pointed at one end and bearing a head at an opposite end; and

a plurality of hollow holding elements connected in series along a longitudinal

Application No.: 10/773,447

Docket No.: 713-1058

direction of said strip;

wherein:

each of said holding elements receives and surrounds the shank of one of said fasteners, and comprises upper and lower portions adjacent the head and the pointed end of said fastener, respectively; and

the upper portion of at least one of said holding elements extends radially outwardly, in a direction transverse to said longitudinal direction, beyond a maximum radial extent of the lower portion in said transverse direction, whereby the upper portion [[being]] is engageable with a wall of a bore of the fastening apparatus for preventing the fastener held by said at least one holding element from tilting when placed in a firing position in the bore.

12. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 11, wherein said at least one holding element is positioned at an end of said strip.

13. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 11, wherein said at least one holding element comprises the two holding elements positioned at opposite ends of said strip.

14. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 11, wherein said at least one holding element comprises at least one of the holding elements positioned in a middle of said strip.

15. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 11, wherein said at least one holding element comprises all the holding elements of said strip.

16. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 11, wherein all the holding

Application No.: 10/773,447Docket No.: 713-1058

elements of said strip are identical.

17. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 11, wherein each of said holding element comprises a tubular part and a ring on top of said tubular part, said ring defining the upper portion of said holding element and being elongated in said transverse direction.

18. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 17, wherein the upper portion of said at least one holding element comprises, in addition to said ring, at least one projection extending, in said transverse direction, radially outwardly from said ring to define a maximum radial extent of said upper portion.

19. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 18, wherein the upper portion of said at least one holding element comprises two said projections diametrically opposed in said transverse direction.

20. (Previously presented) The strip of claim 18, wherein an upper surface of said at least one projection is flush with an upper surface of said ring, whereas a lower surface of said at least one projection is at a level above a lower surface of said ring.

21. (Cancelled)

22. (Previously presented) In combination, the strip of fasteners of claim 11 and a loading device for transferring the fasteners of said strip into the fastening apparatus; said loading device comprising an elongated internal passage in which said strip is receivable, a wall of said passage including at least one groove with which the upper portions of said fasteners are engageable when said fasteners are received in said

**Application No.: 10/773,447****Docket No.: 713-1058**

passage.

23. (Previously presented) The combination of claim 22, wherein the passage of said loading device further comprises at least one shoulder downwardly spaced from said at least one groove, said at least one shoulder directly supporting, from below, the lower portions of the fasteners received in said passage.

24. (Previously presented) The combination of claim 22, further comprising said fastening apparatus;

said fastening apparatus comprising, in addition to said bore, a weight adapted to propelled along said bore for driving said fasteners, one at a time, from the firing position within said bore out of said fastening apparatus;

the wall of the bore of said fastening apparatus comprising another groove with which the upper portion of one of said fasteners is engageable when said one fastener is loaded in the firing position by said loading apparatus, thereby preventing said one fastener from tilting when placed in the firing position.

25. (Previously presented) The combination of claim 24, wherein said at least one holding element comprises all the holding elements of said strip; each of said holding element comprises a tubular part and a ring on top of said tubular part, said ring defining the upper portion of said holding element and being elongated in said transverse direction;

the upper portion of each of said holding elements comprises, in addition to said ring, two projections being diametrically opposed in said transverse direction and extending radially outwardly from said ring to define a maximum radial extent of said upper portion;

the wall of the passage of said loading device includes two said grooves each

**Application No.: 10/773,447****Docket No.: 713-1058**

engageable with one of the projections of each fastener being received in said passage;  
and

said another groove in the bore of said fastening apparatus is contiguous to the grooves of said loading device.

26. (Previously presented) In combination, the strip of fasteners of claim 11 and the fastening apparatus;

said fastening apparatus comprising, in addition to said bore, a weight adapted to propelled along said bore for driving said fasteners, one at a time, from the firing position within said bore out of said fastening apparatus;

the wall of the bore of said fastening apparatus comprising a groove with which the upper portion of one of said fasteners is engageable when said one fastener is loaded in the firing position, thereby preventing said one fastener from tilting when placed in the firing position.

27. (Previously presented) The combination of claim 26, wherein a maximum radial extent of the upper portion of said at least one holding element is greater than an internal diameter of said bore outside said groove.

28. (Previously presented) A loading device for transferring the fasteners of the strip of fasteners of claim 11 into a firing position in a bore of a fastening apparatus, said loading device comprising an elongated internal passage in which said strip is receivable;

a wall of said passage including at least one groove with which the upper portions of said fasteners are engageable when said fasteners are received in said passage;

said passage further comprising at least one shoulder downwardly spaced from said at least one groove, for directly supporting, from below, the lower portions of said fasteners received in said passage.

Application No.: 10/773,447

Docket No.: 713-1058

29. (Previously presented) A fastening apparatus for driving the fasteners of the strip of fasteners of claim 11, said fastening apparatus comprising:

a bore having a firing position from which said fasteners are driven out of said apparatus; and

a weight adapted to propelled along said bore for driving said fasteners, one at a time, from the firing position within said bore out of said fastening apparatus;

the wall of the bore of said fastening apparatus comprising a groove in a vicinity of said firing position to be engageable with the upper portion of one of said fasteners when said one fastener is loaded in the firing position, thereby preventing said one fastener from tilting when placed in the firing position.

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